

Remarks

Favorable review is requested in view of the following remarks. Claims 1 - 11 have been cancelled without prejudice. Editorially amendments have been made to the specification. Claims 12 - 20 are pending in the application.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 12 - 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Yamaya et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,641,614). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection, and respectfully request reconsideration in view of the following comments.

The invention claimed is directed to a method of removing silver soil from the surface of an object. The method includes contacting the object with a composition. The composition comprises a reducing agent, an alkaline source, and an aqueous solution. The object is rinsed with an aqueous solution.

Claims 12 and 16 are directed at a method of removing silver soil from the surface of an object or photoprocessing rack, respectively, that requires contacting the object or rack with a composition comprising a reducing agent, an alkaline source, and an aqueous solution.

In contrast, Yamaya et al. relates to a processing method for a silver halide photographic light sensitive material. Yamaya et al. disclose removing undesired salts. However, the undesired salts are removed from the processing solutions that are used to make the photographic light sensitive material, not objects. The salts are removed to increase the dissolving speed of the photographic light sensitive material. See column 2, lines 46 - 52 of Yamaya et al. In addition, Yamaya et al. do not disclose or suggest that the undesired salts are silver soil. Furthermore, Yamaya et al. do not disclose or suggest contacting an object with a composition. Rather, Yamaya et al. are concerned with providing a method of producing a photographic light sensitive material that increases the rate that the photographic light sensitive material dissolves. See column 1, lines 24 - 34 and column 2, lines 46 - 52 of Yamaya et al. Yamaya et al. are not concerned with removing silver soil from the surface of an object. Therefore, Yamaya et al. do not disclose or suggest removing silver soil from the surface of an object or rack that requires contacting the object or rack with a composition comprising a reducing agent, an alkaline source, and an aqueous solution. Withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

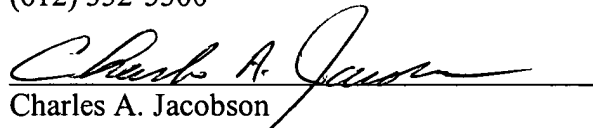
Conclusion

In view of the amendments and comments presented herein, favorable reconsideration in the form of a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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